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Title : Need to declare Sunderbans Waterways as National Waterways.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL (JOYNAGAR): Sundrabans in West Bengal is the largest delta in Asia with an all-season rivers' stretch of 222 KMs. These rivers can be used for navigation. However, they remained unutilized so far. There was a proposal for declaring Haldia-Raimangal stretch or rivers, which is about 91 KMs, as National Waterways. The proposal has already been cleared but it is awaiting clearance by the Environment and Forests Ministry.

Sundarbans is one of the most industrially backward and poverty stricken areas of our country. If the perennial rivers of Sundarbans are utilized for navigation, it would provide employment opportunities to the local people including fishermen. This would also help in improving the socio-economic conditions of the area.

I would, therefore, urge upon the Government to take early steps for declaring Sundarbans Waterways as National Waterways.